ONE PENNY

Workers' Dreadnought

FOR GOING TO THE ROOT.

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THE VIEWS OF PROUDHON.

By Sylvia Pankhurst.

The Freedom Press is to be congratulated upon the re-publication of P. J. Proudhon's "General Idea of the Revolution in the Nineteenth Century,"* originally published in 1851.

Proudhon's exposition of capitalist society as he saw it at that time is remarkably true and vivid, and we cannot fail to read it with interest and appreciation, though we must differ from him strongly in a great part of his conclusions. We differ emphatically from his desire to retain private ownership and petty trading banks, etc., on a basis of petty capitalism. On the other hand, his denunciation of the tyranny of majority rule and of the centralised bureaucracy advocated by the State Socialists is unanswerable, and the industrial Communism of the future must avoid the evils he justly condemns if it is to provide a satisfactory social basis.

Proudhon's ironical advice to the reactionaries, if they desire to retain their power, is interesting. He says to them:—

"It will be necessary, if you expect your work to stand:

(1) To declare the state of siege general, absolute, and for an unlimited time;

(2) To decree the deportation beyond the seas of a hundred thousand individuals;

(3) To double the effective strength of the army, and to keep it constantly on a war footing;

(4) To increase the garrisons and the police, to arm all the fortresses, to build in each district a strong castle, to interest the military in the reaction by making the army an endowed and ennobled caste, which can partly recruit itself;

(5) To rearrange the people in corporations of arts and crafts, no one accessible to any other; to suppress free competition; to create in commerce, industry, agriculture, property, finance, a privileged class which will join hands with the aristocracy of the army and the Church.

(6) To expurgate or burn nine-tenths of the books in the libraries, books of science, philosophy, and history, and to do away with every vestige of the intellectual movement for four centuries; to commit the direction of studies and the archives of civilisation to the Jesuits exclusively;

(7) To increase the taxes two hundred million dollars, and issue new loans in order to cover these expenses; and to erect a special and inalienable privilege for the support of the new nobility, as well as of the churches, seminaries, and convents."

In his seventh point Proudhon shows that he understood the importance to reaction of creating a strong state, and the reaction in all Europe has certainly done what he suggested in this respect.

Proudhon's fifth point is still more striking. The privileged trading class, which would join hands with the aristocracy of the army and the Church, has long been an immense factor in our midst. The Stock Exchange and the big business enterprises are now as much the profession of the aristocrat as the Church and the army, though it was not so in Proudhon's day.

Remarkable, too, is his advice to the reaction "to arrange the people in corporations of arts and crafts, no one accessible to any other."

The craft unions which display so conspicuous a lack of solidarity the one with the other, and break up the unity of the working class, are here visualised for us.

Analysing the Revolution of 1789, Proudhon justly says:—

"The feudal order having been abolished on the night of the 4th of August, and the principles of liberty and civil equality proclaimed, the consequence was that in future society must be organised, not for politics and war, but for work. What in fact was the feudal organisation? It was one entirely military. What is work? The negation of fighting. To abolish feudalism, then, meant to commit ourselves to a perpetual peace, not only foreign but domestic. By this single act all the old politics between State and State, all the systems of European equilibrium, were abrogated; the same equality, the same independence, which the Revolution promised to bring about among individuals must exist between nation and nation, province and province, city and city. . . .

"It was evident that the problem of the Revolution lay in erecting everywhere the reign of equality and industry."

Proudhon points out that after the French Revolution there was a considerable impetus in agriculture and industry which in all countries, and especially in our own, was on the eve of new developments. He argues that it was in the field of political economy that the efforts of the Revolution should have been exerted, but this was not understood by those who secured the leadership:—

"All their ideas were of politics only. The counter-revolutionary forces aiding, the revolutionary party, forced for the moment to place itself on the defensive and to organise itself for war, the nation was again delivered into the hands of warriors and lawyers."

All this emphasises for us the need that in the coming social changes that the industrial workers shall be organised at the point of production; able to take charge of the essential services so that they may not fall into the hands of parasitic exploiters.

Proudhon continues:—

"One might say that nobility, clergy, and monarchy had disappeared only to make way for another governing set of Anglomaniac constitutionaries, classic republicans, militaristic democrats, all infatuated with the Romans and Spartans, and, above all, very much so with themselves. On the other hand, caring but very little for the real needs of the country; which, understanding nothing of what was going on, permitted itself to be half destroyed at their leisure, and finally attached itself to the fortune of a soldier. . . . The revolutionaries failed in their mission after the fall of the Bastille, as they have failed since the abdication of Louis Philippe, and for the same reasons: the total lack of economic ideas, their prejudice in favour of government, and the distrust of the lower classes which they harboured. . . .

". . . it necessarily followed that the new society, scarcely conceived, should remain in embryo; that, instead of developing according to economic laws, it should languish in constitutionalism; that its life should be a perpetual contradiction, that, in place of the ordinary condition, which is characteristic of it, it should exhibit everywhere systematic corruption and legal inefficiency; finally, that the power which is the expression of this society, reproducing with the most scrupulous fidelity the antimony of its principles, should find itself continually in the position of fighting with the people, and the people in continual need of attacking power."

Analysing the "chaos of economic forces" that grew up after the Revolution, Proudhon says:—

"I call certain principles of action *economic forces*, such as the division of labour, competition, collective force, exchange, credit, property, etc., which are to labour and to wealth what the destruction of classes, the representative system, monarchical heredity, administrative centralisation, the judicial hierarchy, etc., are to the State."

The characterisation is acute, but as we shall presently observe, Proudhon did not see that what was required to produce an equalitarian society was to sweep away all of these save the division of labour on a basis not of profit making, but of mutual service to secure abundance for all and congenial life and occupation for every individual.

A scathing account of capitalist production in his time is given by Proudhon in words which are still brilliantly apt, though the justification for them has been intensified.

On the division of labour he says:—

"Without division of labour the use of machines would not have gone beyond the most ancient and most common utensils. . . . The French Revolution itself, lacking an outlet, would have been but a sterile revolt; it would have accomplished nothing. But, on the other hand, by division of labour, the product of labour mounts to tenfold, a hundredfold, political economy rises to the height of philosophy, the intellectual level of nations is continually raised. . . .

". . . This economic force was left to all the overturns caused by chance and by interest. The division of labour, becoming always more minute, and remaining without counterpoise, the workman has been given over to a more and more degrading subjection to machinery. That is the effect of the division of labour when it is applied as practised in our days, not only to make industry incomparably more productive, but at the same time to deprive the worker in mind and body of all the wealth which he creates for the capitalist and the speculator."

Proudhon writes as one who sees the factory system growing up, and is able to compare it with the home craftsmanship it is displacing. He quotes also M. de Tocqueville:—

"In proportion to the more complete application of the principle of the division of labour, the workman becomes weaker, more limited, and more dependent."

J. B. Say is also quoted:—

"It may be said that the division of labour is a skilful mode of employing the power of man; that it adds prodigiously to the products of society; but that it subtracts something from the capacity of each man taken individually."

The coming of machines, like, for instance, the linotype, which might require as much or more skill in the operator than the hand process, was not visualised by these writers, nor the solidarity of the factory workers. The terrible hardship which the coming of the machines meant to the workers of the time is indicated in the following passages:—

"The more the value of the worker falls, and the demand for labour diminishes, the lower are wages and the greater is poverty. And it is not a few hundreds of men, but millions, who are the victims of this economic perturbation.

* "General Idea of the Revolution."—*Freedom Press.*

"In England, through the division of labour and the power of machinery, the number of workmen has been observed to diminish by a third, by a half, by three-quarters, by five-sixths; and the wages decreasing in like proportion fall from 30 pence a day to fivepence and threepence. Throughout entire provinces the proprietors have driven out useless mouths. Everywhere first women, then children have taken the place of men in manufacture. Consumption being unable to keep pace with production among an impoverished people, the latter is obliged to wait; and regular out-of-work periods are the result—of six weeks, three months, and six months of each year. Statistics of these periods of idleness of Parisian workmen have recently been published by one of them, Pierre Vincard; the details are heartrending. The smallness of the wages being in proportion to the time of idleness, the conclusion is reached that certain workmen who earn 20 cents a day must live on 10, because they are idle for six months."

Philanthropic conservatives, says Proudhon, charge the industrial system with being at fault, and desire to go back to the feudal farming period, but he declares that it is not industry which should be blamed but economic chaos.

COMPETITION.

Proudhon, lacking in certain respects the power to visualise the ultimate tendencies of economic forces which have possessed, regards competition as both right and necessary. Production for use as opposed to production for sale did not appeal to him as the ultimate solution of the evils which distressed him. He says:—

"*Competition* . . . is one of the most powerful factors of industry . . . one of the most valuable guarantees. Partly for the sake of it the first Revolution was brought about. The workmen's unions, established at Paris some years since, have recently given it a new sanction by establishing among themselves piecework and abandoning, after their experience of it, the absurd idea of the equality of wages. Competition is, moreover, the law of the market, the spice of trade, the salt of labour. To suppress competition is to suppress liberty itself."

Proudhon is called an anarchist; yet whilst his desire to preserve individual enterprise and to avoid collective interference was so strong that he advocated the retention of production for sale. Yet he desired such legal regulation of competition, and of other features of production for sale, as would have been impossible of application and enforcement save by a strong government machinery. He says:—

"Competition, lacking legal forms and superior regulating intelligence, has been perverted in turn like the division of labour."

Proudhon recognises that in practice competition has

"ended in building up a mercantile and land aristocracy, a thousand times more rapacious than the old aristocracy of the nobility. Through competition all the profits of production go to capital; the consumer, without suspecting the frauds of commerce, is fleeced by the speculator, and the condition of the workers is made more and more precarious."

CREDIT.

Proudhon, desirous of retaining production for sale, therefore of necessity desires to retain money and credit. Indeed he says:—

"Of all economic forces the most vital, in a society reconstructed for industry by revolution, is credit."

THE FINANCIAL POWER.

He complains that the legislature has not regulated credit, and wisely observes:—

"The FINANCIAL power, far greater than the executive, legislative, and judicial, has never had the honour of mention in our various charters. Handed over by a decree of the Empire on 23rd of April, 1803, to a company of revenue farmers, it has remained until now in the condition of a hidden power; hardly anything can be found relating to it except a law of 1807, fixing the rate of interest at 5 per cent. . . . The Government, while sacrificing the country, did not spare itself; it treated itself as it treated others. . . .

"What has been the result of this incredible negligence?

"In the first place, forestalling and usury being practised upon coin by preference, coin being at the same time the tool of industrial transactions and the rarest of merchandise, and consequently the safest and most profitable, dealing in money was rapidly concentrated in the hands of a few monopolists, whose fortress is the Bank.

"Thereupon the country and the State were made the vassals of a coalition of capitalists.

"Thanks to the tax imposed by this bankocracy upon all industrial and agricultural industry, property has already been mortgaged for two billion dollars, and the State for more than one billion.

"The interest paid by the nation for this double indebtedness, with costs, renewals, commissions, and discounts on loans included, amounts to at least 240 million dollars.

"This enormous sum of 240 millions does not yet express all that the producers have to pay to the financial exploitation. We should add from 140 to 160 millions for discounts, advances, delays in payments, dividends, obligations under private seal, court expenses, etc.

"Property fleeced by the Bank has been obliged to follow the same course in its relations with industry, to become a usurer in turn towards labour; thus farm rent and house rent have reached a prohibitive rate, which drives the cultivator from the field and the workman from his home.

"So much that to-day they whose labour has created everything cannot buy their own products, nor obtain furniture, nor own a habitation, nor even say: This house, this garden, this vine, this field are mine.

"On the contrary, it is an economic necessity in the present system of credit, and with the growing disorganisation of industrial forces, that the poor man, working harder and harder, should be always poorer, and the rich man, without working, always richer."

That exposition of the capitalism of that time is true in the main essentials to-day. The evils of the bankocracy were perhaps more easily realised in those days of its rapid emergence and rise to power than at the present time, when all men are thoroughly accustomed to it.

PARASITISM.

Proudhon continues:—

"If we may believe the estimate of a skilled economist, M. Chevé, out of the two billions of value produced every year, one and one-fifth billions are taken away by parasites; that is to say by finance, by predacious property, and by the budget and its satellites. The balance, perhaps four-fifths of a billion, remains for its producers. Another able economist, M. Chevalier, dividing the estimated product of the country by its 36 million inhabitants, has found that the income per head per day was an average of 13 cents; and as from this figure must be deducted enough to pay interest, rent, taxes, and the expenses which they involve. M. de Morogues, yet another learned economist, has concluded that for a large part of the population daily consumption was less than 5 cents. But since rents, the same as taxes, continually increase, while through economic organisation work and wages diminish, it follows that, according to the aforesaid economists, the material comfort of the working classes follows a decreasing progression, which may be represented by this series of numbers: 65, 60, 55, 50, 45, 40, 35, 30, 25, 20, 15, 10, 5, 0, — 5, — 10, — 15, etc."

The fact that the worker's standard cannot be permanently depressed beneath his subsistence level and some other factors have, of course, modified this estimate of Proudhon. Nevertheless, the estimate he quotes of M. Chevé, giving 6-10ths of parasitism, would have to be increased to-day.

The solution offered by Proudhon is a great reduction of the price of credit; a solution, remember, which could only be maintained by a perpetual struggle with the capitalist waged by a strong and vigilant government, not subject to capitalist influences. The solution is actually impracticable.

CAPITALIST GOVERNMENT.

In attacking the capitalist, Proudhon points out that the public debt of France rose from 12,661,532 dollars in 1814 to 54,200,000 dollars in 1851, and that the budget rose from 117,000,000 dollars in 1802 to 33,436,222 dollars in 1848. Between 1830 and 1848 the naval and military expenses cost 1,501,000,000 dollars, while those of public instruction were only 46,560,400.

Regarding taxation Proudhon justly observes:

"The capitalist pays nothing. . . . What one of the workers would not esteem himself lucky if he were granted 400 dollars income upon the sole condition that he should give up a quarter of it in redemption?"

And again:—

"In fact, whenever the latter [the capitalist] is put down on the books of the assessor for any amount whatever, or pays the duties established by the fiscal authorities on objects of consumption, it is clear that, as his income is composed solely of the interest upon his capital, and not by the exchange of his products, his income remains free from taxation, inasmuch as it is only the producer pays."

Having laid down the dictum that only the producer pays, Proudhon is illogical in his contention that a single tax on property would draw the tax from capital without affecting labour.

[With Proudhon's views on the social contract *versus* majority rule, and on associated labour, we shall deal next week.]

IS SOCIALISM POSSIBLE?

BY H. BROWN.

This question has often been asked at different Socialist meetings, whether for educational purposes or otherwise I know not, that remains to be seen. But first of all, just glance into our present crisis, strikes taking place year after year through the reduction of wages and the high prices of food and other commodities that are necessary, and the thousands upon thousands of men, women, and children who are deprived of their last resources, that of selling their labour power to a master. Only prostitution and starvation is in front of them.

These are but very few of the degrading conditions that the working class have to endure under our so-called civilisation. This being the case, I say that capitalism has ceased to function and therefore it stands condemned. Seeing that the workers produce everything that society requires, and that the directive ability plays no part in the production and distribution of wealth, Socialism is possible. All that is required is common sense and reason. The meaning of Socialism is this: The common brotherhood of man, and the common sisterhood of woman, and that every being born into this world has a right to enjoy that which nature provides and anything that he or she helps to produce.

Free access to that which is plentiful in regard to food, clothing, and housing, and any such luxuries to satisfy the people's taste. In regard to education, no child need leave school until it reaches adult age. It may sound funny to some people, but under this system children would be taught not only to read and write, but, if they so desired, would be given the preference of studying different sciences, such as art, sculpture, medicine, chemistry, etc., something that would benefit them in the future. What does capitalist education consist of? Obedience: you must obey those who are in authority. Also servility: You must be servile to your masters, and so on. The idea of distinction between different classes and nations breeding the germs of hatred, so that in time of war the workers will rally in order to kill their bitter enemies.

Capitalism implies that those who own either field, factory, or workshop, exploit others, and by so doing create misery and degrade those who do not own.

Socialism implies the abolition of exploitation. Liberty, equality, fraternity is Socialism in its true sense, and it is hastening to realisation.

TRAFFIC BILL IN PARLIAMENT.

The Traffic Bill was drafted by the Tories. The Labour Party has taken it over at the dictates of Lord Ashfield, of the 'Bus and Tube Combine.

FRANK WORDS FROM GOSLING.

Mr. Gosling, the Minister of Transport, did his best for the ill-starred measure in introducing it. He knows it is a bureaucratic enormity, and apologised thus :—

"I should like at this point to say a few words to the members of my own party as to the danger of being swallowed up by the officialism of Whitehall. I hope I am no fool. Although I know something of this officialism outside, since I have been inside I have more than ever admired the responsible Civil Servants, to whom one must necessarily turn for expert advice and assistance. We cannot do without them In a great department like the one which is wanted to deal with the matter of this kind nobody, especially one who has only been in office a few weeks or a few months, can hope to conduct the business without their assistance. I thought I had better say something on this point as we shall probably hear something on it before the day is over."

Mr. Gosling, of course, is right. Cabinet Ministers who usually know nothing whatever of the business of their Department, and do not stay there long, are inevitably dependent on the departmental officials. That only proves that the Cabinet system is wrong; not that the departmental bureaucracy is right. The democratising of industry by autonomous workshop management, not bureaucratic centralism, is the goal to aim at.

THE TRAFFIC PROBLEM.

Colonel Moore Brabazon (C.), the father of the Traffic Bill which has been affiliated to Mr. Gosling, dealt at length with traffic problems. In 1912, 6,000 vehicles passed the junction of Euston Road and Tottenham Court Road in 12 hours; in 1919, 14,000 vehicles passed; 31,000 vehicles pass the Mansion House from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.; 56,000 pass Hyde Park Corner, representing a burden of 116,000 tons.

Colonel Moore Brabazon thinks the London police regulate the traffic too much, saying: "It is universally admitted the traffic of London never went better than during the police strike."

We are glad to get that admission from a Tory, since we are desirous of doing away with the police force. The Colonel added that traffic at the point where St. James' Street joins the Mall is never regulated and there is no trouble.

"Only the other day a young policeman thought he would regulate it, with the result that there were piles of cars waiting to be allowed through in both directions. As soon as he went off the beat somebody who knew the particular beat came on duty and left the traffic alone, with the result that the congestion melted away and everything went on quite peacefully."

Altogether, he considered it best to leave the traffic alone. He had stood for hours observing how it is done.

Though the Colonel wants to leave the vehicles alone when they are on the roads, he wants to interfere with the putting of vehicles on to the roads to ply for hire to increase profits to certain interests.

He argued that 'buses may be kept off tram routes to prevent the trams being "knocked out," and 'buses should be prevented from competing with other 'buses. The tubes and certain 'buses which are in the combine pool their takings. He desired the trams to be brought into the combine, to make the rich services pay for the poor services.

If we should suggest such mutual aid being extended throughout the social organism, Colonel Moore Brabazon and his party would indignantly oppose the suggestion; but when it is a question of delivering the public over to a profit-making combine they are enthusiastic for the plan.

Mr. Percy Harris (Lib.) moved the rejection of the Bill, which he said is a direct attack on the pirate omnibuses and small companies. These 'buses, he said, provide facilities for people to get home in the rush hours, when there is a terrible number of men and women trying to get home.

Mr. Herbert Morrison, the most orthodox and moderate of Labour members, strongly opposed the Bill. He justified his opposition to the Labour Government in the words of Mr. Ramsay MacDonald in the *New Leader*:—

"I refer to this, not to rouse any party controversy, but to draw attention to the necessity of finding some other foundation for Parliamentary authority than party members who are assumed to have no individual independence, but to be shepherded like a flock of sheep. The first effect will be to loosen the party, because members, while adhering generally to party principles and conceptions of policy, will more frequently than they do now use their own judgment as to how to vote."

Mr. Morrison said he was going to vote in accordance with the declared principles of the Labour Party and the members of the Government.

WHAT THE LABOUR PARTY SAID WHEN IT WAS A TORY BILL.

In July, 1923, the National Executive Committee of the Labour Party had passed a resolution on this very measure when it was predicted as a Tory measure on the basis of Sir Henry Maybury's evidence before the Commission on London Government. This resolution was :—

"That the National Executive of the Labour Party notices with concern that the Ministry of Transport are considering the introduction of legislation which would secure to the Minister, nominally assisted by an Advisory Committee, certain powers relating to the traffic services in Greater London which are now discharged by the municipalities or are appropriate to the municipalities. The Executive recalls the policy approved by itself and by a conference representing London and the Home Counties on the basis of which evidence was given to the Royal Commission on London Government. The Committee recalls the proposals by the Minister of Transport as wrong in principle from the point of view of local self-government and as meeting with the opposition of the Labour Party. . . .

"Should some interim authority be unavoidable, the Executive takes the view that it should be composed of representatives of local authorities in Greater London vested with adequate power."

LABOUR PARTY TURNS ROUND.

Yet Mr. MacDonald had said of this same measure :—

"We received from our predecessors a Bill which faced the problem. We found it drafted, and, upon examination, so far as the general outlines were concerned, so far as the general intention was concerned, we took it over without any reserve."

LORD ASHFIELD'S THREAT.

Mr. Morrison added :—

"It is going too far to say that this Bill of itself will solve the strike. Further, I am not disposed to allow Lord Ashfield to come to this House and say: '*If you do not give me this Bill I will not come to terms with my men.* . . .'

"I am not going to agree that the head of the traffic combine shall hold a threat of that kind over the House of Commons. . . . Lord Ashfield has fought for this monopoly year in year out. He is exploiting the present industrial situation to secure a monopoly for the whole of London, without any payment or compensation, without any regard to the public interest or any check on him."

Mr. Morrison protested that he would not be a party to another step in the reduction of London to the status of a Crown Colony. It might as well be handed over to the Colonial Secretary as to the Minister of Transport. It was said, he admitted, that Ministers are responsible to Parliament, but the means of Parliamentary discussion on the acts of Ministers on local questions were quite ineffective. There would be no real control over the Minister of Transport at all. The Bill was going to the country.

MR. WEBB'S REPLY.

Mr. Sidney Webb defended the Bill half-heartedly, saying the Government had introduced it not because they had "any particular love for this particular kind of Bill," but because it was the best Bill they could get to meet the emergency. He did not think it would be fair to keep the London public without a traffic authority because they could not agree "as to what that traffic authority should be." Mr. Webb would like to see a directly elected traffic authority; failing that the only alternative he could see was "to put the power in the hands of another democratic authority, and that authority should be a Minister who is responsible to the House of Commons."

Needless to say, Mr. Webb's idea of democracy differs greatly from our own.

As to regulating the fares charged by the company, Mr. Webb regarded that as too controversial to be attempted.

Labour and Tory M.P.'s supported the Bill; Liberals and some Labour M.P.'s, most of whom represented London constituencies, voted against it.

FROM CALIFORNIA.

San Pedro,
California.

DEAR EDITOR,—Since writing you last from New York, the wanderlust attacked me again, and I find myself here in California, known to the employing class as the "Golden West," but well known to the rebels of the exploited class as "Darkest California." It is well described as such. The treatment to which the members of the I.W.W. are subjected reminds one of a bygone age. The literature of the organisation is classed second, transported from coast to coast by the postal authorities, and yet here we are threatened, imprisoned, and assaulted by the police when we offer it for sale, and even illiterate persons found in possession of it are not safe. Within this past month over 30 I.W.W. members have been cast into steel tanks in the gaol of Los Angeles, starved and beaten. Only the victims themselves can fully realise the immensity of the crime. Those who protest to the gaolers are thrown into condemned murderers' cells. Ninety-six members are in the gaols of Folsum and San Quenten for from one to 14 years for activities in the organisation. Not one of them is charged with any act of violence, or any attempt made to prove it.

Capitalist soap-boxers are permitted to charge us with all sorts of acts, but when questioned quite civilly, as I did, we are immediately pounced upon by uniformed and disguised cops and ordered out of the assembly. Our places of residence are often raided without warrant, and all literature of an advanced nature is destroyed, regardless of cost or ownership. No street meetings are permitted, and police raid our halls and threaten us, as the enclosed Press cutting will prove. I need scarcely mention the fact that the Third International Communists, with their exhortations of "Vote, vote, vote," and "Bore from within until you are bored without," are exempt from these persecutions. They are regarded as quite as harmless as the Gospel purveyors, although, truth to tell, are not allowed outdoor propaganda.

An injunction served on us states that mere membership constitutes contempt of court, and entitles the member to six months without trial by jury.

F. J. S.

IMPORTANT.

You believe in the policy of the "Workers' Dreadnought," and there are many people who think like you who would like to have the paper, only they have not heard of it. Will you help us to bring it to their notice by sending us a donation towards advertising it? We need a minimum of 25s. a week for this.

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Workers' Dreadnought

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Editor: SYLVIA PANKHURST.

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Our View.

THE TRAMWAY STRIKE.

PRIVY COUNCIL VERSUS WORKERS' COUNCIL.

How serious was the transport position of London when the tube workers declared their intention to join the tram and 'bus men in a solidarity strike will be realised by people outside London when it is pointed out that London's passengers number 9,000,000 a day and that 5,000,000 of these travel by tube.

EMERGENCY POWERS.

The constitutional issue which was raised during the strike was a highly important one, and though the matter was not put to the test of practical application, it is one which must be seriously considered and discussed, as it is certain to come up again.

The question referred to is the summoning of the Privy Council to discuss the strike, and the decision of the Government that should the underground railwaymen cease work, the Privy Council should issue a Proclamation declaring a state of emergency and apply the Emergency Powers Act.

The Privy Council is a survival from the days of monarchic autocracy. It is a highly reactionary body, since its members are appointed for life by the King and are subject to no sort of popular pressure. All sorts and conditions of aristocrats, rich men and political party hacks, have been appointed to the Privy Council by the King on the advice of successive Governments, and there they remain for life. A Privy Councillor takes an oath to support the King in all his quarrels and to disclose to him anything that it may be to his interest to know. The oath binds the Privy Councillor to support the King in a quarrel with the Government, the King and the Government in a quarrel with the Parliament, the King, Government and Parliament in a quarrel with the people. Apart from the oath itself, it is obvious that the Privy Council is apt to be an even more reactionary body than the House of Lords, which is saying a great deal.

It is therefore not reassuring to learn that such a body as the Privy Council is to be convened to take any share in the handling of a workers' struggle. It was a bad precedent to summon the Privy Council on this occasion—a precedent of which the capitalist parties will take advantage, if and when they are next in power, and which the Court and the Privy Council will surely regard as an extension of their authority in these supposedly democratic days.

AIR MINISTER AND PRIVY COUNCIL.

It was rather an ominous than a graceful act to send to the Privy Council meeting to discuss the strike at Knowsley, Lord Parmoor and Lord Thomson. The former is frankly a Conservative and has consented to represent the Labour Party in the House of Lords upon the basis of an agreed programme. Lord Thomson—a very recent recruit to the Labour Party—is Secretary of State for Air. It was unpleasantly suggestive to send the Air Minister to discuss applying Emergency Powers to a trade dispute. This is neither Africa nor America; it is moderate Britain, and a Labour Government is in office; nevertheless, Lord Thomson, representing the Government at a Privy Council on the tramway strike, recalls the aircraft bombing of the mine strikers of Virginia, U.S.A., and the aircraft warfare on the mine strikers of South Africa.

Nothing happened, of course; the employers accepted a compromise, and the workers are back at their posts. Nevertheless, one must not forget that under the Emergency Powers Act strike funds may be seized and punishment by fine up to £100 and imprisonment up to three months may be imposed on strikers or officials assisting the strike. The forces of the Crown may also be used to replace strikers. During the coal lock out of 1921, the Government used naval men to pump the mines, as well as calling out the Army reserves and raising a defence force of 75,000 men at a cost of £825,000, beside spending another £970,000.

Orders issued under the Emergency Powers Act are valid for seven days, after which, if they are to remain in force, they must be laid before both Houses of Parliament. The exercise of Emergency Powers is usually counted on to achieve its object before seven days have elapsed. There is rarely and certainly is not, at the present time, we think, a majority in the House of Commons which would attempt to censure, overthrow or procure redress for anything done by Order in Council.

It is impossible to say how far the hands of Governments may be forced by those strange reactionary influences and vague survivals of power which lie half-hidden behind Parliament in the Monarchy and the Privy Council. It is an offence to democratic, not to say equalitarian, ideals that such powers should be invoked even in name.

THE CAPITALIST ULTIMATUM.

Mr. Bevin, in recommending the strikers to accept the compromise terms which the employers finally offered, was reported as saying:—

> "*I wish a Tory Government was in power to-day.* They would learn something about the bitterness of a strike. *We would not be afraid of their skeleton services* or of their Fascisti; but the snarling dogs on the other side are *trying to use the strike to break the Government by presenting the alternative of making the Government employ blackleg labour or giving up the seals of office.*"

Was this merely a piece of special pleading to induce the strikers to accept the ballot, or was Mr. Bevin giving a true presentment of what was going on behind the scenes? Previously he had emphatically announced that if Emergency Powers were used by his colleagues in the Government, it would be to take over 'buses, trams and tubes to run them in the public interest, paying the strikers the increased wage they were demanding in the meantime.

THE LABOUR PARTY RESOLUTION.

A joint meeting of the General Council of the Trade Union Congress and the Labour Party Executive passed the following resolution:—

"That while deploring the suggestion that the Government may consider itself obliged to employ the Emergency Powers Act, this joint body urges upon the Government that in the event of its using its powers it should use them to take over the whole of the London traffic services, paying the wages and observing the conditions demanded until such time as a committee, to be immediately set up, has reported as to the best method of permanently settling traffic problems."

MR. MACDONALD'S STATEMENT.

The Government evidently had no intention of obeying the Labour Party resolution as to the use it should make of Emergency Powers; on March 27th Mr. Ramsay MacDonald said in the House of Commons:—

> "We have had multitudinous suggestions as to how we are to protect the public conveyance. We have had proposals that we shoul dflood the streets with soldiers. . . venience. We have had proposals that we should flood the streets with soldiers. . . We have had suggestions *of all kinds of extremes.* We have had suggestions, as I said, that we should flood the steets with soldiers. *On the other hand we have had suggestions that we should commandeer all the property, all the machinery, and all the material owned by employers. . . On one extreme one set of suggestions; on another, another set of suggestions.*"

The proposals of Mr. Bevin and the Labour Party Executive are thus dismissed. Mr. MacDonald proceeded:—

> "The rule the Government is going to adopt in putting these powers into operation, if it has to do it, is the rule of protecting public convenience; the rule of doing nothing to compel the area of the strike to be extended."

Mr. MacDonald also said:—

> "We shall do our best to advance public convenience while the dispute lasts. . . *The first step that will be taken is to issue a Proclamation that a state of emergency exists. . . The Government must be armed with the powers which are required should the dispute spread, or should public convenience demand some action which can only be taken under the powers given to it after the issue of the Proclamation. . .*
>
> "*The major public services must also be continued, and the Government, any Government, all Governments, must give protection to those engaged in their legal occupations.*"

Mr. MacDonald's statement most clearly means that had the strike spread the Government intended to replace the strikers and probably to take other action to prevent the spread of the strike, but not to take over the trams and 'buses in the interests of the strikers as the Labour Party asked.

EMERGENCY POWERS VERSUS WORKSHOP COUNCILS.

It should be observed that the Labour Government's respect for Parliamentary Government did not prevent its decision, should the strike spread, to take the extra Parliamentary action sanctioned by a very recent Act of Parliament passed under the influence of the absolutism which grew up during the war.

Confronted with the Privy Council, the workers should have no hesitation in setting up the Workshop Council. The Emergency Powers Act can only be answered by the rapid and direct action which the Workshop Council can furnish.

Moreover, now that the chief officials of the Trade Unions are largely tied by Cabinet office or membership of the Privy Council, the lesson is plainer than ever that the workers need for their protection an organisation which is untainted by such associations and commitments, and is moreover completely under their control.

The workshop movement during the war was accelerated by the fact that the Trade Union officialdom had made a compact of industrial peace with the employing class for the war period and by the entry of the Trade Union officialdom into the Coalition Government. The taking of office without a majority by the Trade Union officialdom is virtually the setting up of a Coalition "to carry on the King's Government," to use a phrase beloved of Mr. J. H. Thomas and some of the Tories.

The setting up of the Workshop Councils is really a very urgent matter to which the rank and file must turn its attention sooner or later—the sooner the better for progress.

THE TRAFFIC BILL.

The Government made a serious concession to the reaction in adopting the Tory Traffic Bill with its most objectionably composed and indirectly appointed advisory body. In return for this concession to the Capitalist combine it did not secure for the workers even the full measure of the little wage demand, for which they came out on strike, nor did it take power to protect the London people by any regulation of the prices which the combine may charge, or the profits it may make. The Traffic Bill strengthens and confirms the

vested interests of the Capitalist combine in the London streets.

WAGES AND PRICES.

The wage struggles which are now arising in all industries are following an upward movement of prices. That upward movement will certainly be accelerated in reply to the wage advances which are being obtained. The little gains which some of the strikers have apparently secured will therefore be wiped out and their economic position will speedily be worse than it was at the time of the strike. The heavy loss sustained by such strikers as the members of the Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen, who only succeeded in getting a wage reduction spread over an extended period, is now apparent.

In spite of the little wage advances which have been agreed to by compromise in a number of strikes, the economic position of the workers will shortly be seen to be still falling. This is another reason why the rank and file, those whom the shoe is pinching, should undertake the management of their own movement.

The upward movement of prices provides striking evidence that the struggle for improved wages is like the journey of the convict on the treadmill, or the squirrel in the cage, and that the abolition of the wage system and the capitalist system itself provide the only hope of peaceful security and plenty for the working class as a whole.

PARLIAMENT AS WE SEE IT.

BOMBAY WAGES.

Bombay mill-owners make a practice of paying wages in the middle of the month following that in which they are earned. Sometimes wages are held back longer. Owing to the January lock-out they were held back six weeks.

HONG KONG BROTHELS.

The following questions and answers are recorded in the Parliamentary Report of Monday, March 27th, 1924:—

MR. JOHN HARRIS asked the Secretary of State for the Colonies whether he is aware that the official appointed to the position of Secretary for Chinese affairs in Hong Kong is informed prior to his appointment, that his duties will include the examination of girls as to their suitability to enter brothels, and then to pass them into the various classes of brothels in the colony. Whether this practice is peculiar to the colony of Hong Kong, and, if not, in how many other British dependencies it is the practice to require British officials to issue passes for girls to become inmates of brothels?

MR. THOMAS: I have no doubt that the official in question knew before his appointment of these duties, which, as I have already stated, are in this regard purely protective. It has been found necessary to give similar protection in the Malay Peninsula, but there is no other part of the Empire containing a large number of Chinese women requiring protection of this nature.

MR. HARRIS: Is the right hon. gentleman prepared to accept the view that it is a violation of British standards to expect British civil servants, not merely to take the oversight—as in this case—of 3,000 prostitutes, but of continually passing into these brothels young girls, and not merely passing them in, but of telling them the street and the house they are to go to, and —as I understand this document—the very floor they are to occupy; will he give the House a promise to look into the matter?

MR. THOMAS: The hon. gentleman knows that there is no more distasteful subject than this for any member of any Government to deal with; he is also perhaps aware that I am meeting a deputation on this subject to-morrow. You cannot deal with a distasteful subject of this kind by question and answer. The Government are alive to the difficulties and dangers of the subject. We have to deal with it in a common-sense way.

MR. AYLES asked the Secretary for the Colonies whether he is prepared to take steps to refuse recognition to the existence of brothels in Hong Kong and other parts of the British Crown Colonies as a step towards abolishing the international traffic in women and children?

MR. THOMAS: I am not convinced the suggested measure would have the desired effect. . . .

Here is a translation of the chrd handed by the British Government in Hong Kong to licensed prostitutes:—

(Translation.)

ISSUED BY THE HONG KONG GOVERNMENT.

The British Government has for its main object the love of the people. You prostitutes; your persons are your own. You can come or go away at liberty. If any extortion or oppression is imposed on you, you can report to the Authorities, and you will get your wrongs redressed.

Note.

The above is handed over to a prostitute on being passed. Her photograph is mounted on a separate card, on the back of which are inserted the following:—

Name of the prostitute .....
No ..... Street ..... Floor.....
Name of Brothel .....
Signature of Secretary for Chinese Affairs.
Date .....

MINERS' MINIMUM WAGE.

Asked by Mr. Clarry whether the Government intends immediately to introduce a Miners' Minimum Wage Bill to settle the present dispute, Mr. Ramsay MacDonald said:—

"No, Sir. The policy of the Government is to use every effort to promote an industrial settlement. I am glad to say that, owing to the intervention of my hon friend, the Secretary for Mines, negotiations have been resumed, and a further meeting between the two sides has been arranged for Tuesday."

Heckled by various members, the Prime Minister added that he hoped the present mining dispute would be settled by industrial means, but the Government had given a conditional pledge to bring in such a Bill.

COAL ROYALTIES.

3,800 owners of coal mining royalties received together £6,317,000 in the year 1923. A comfortable income for doing nothing!

POOR LAW RELIEF TO STRIKERS.

The action of the Attorney General under a Labour Government, against the Bermondsey Guardians for giving relief to strikers is a momentous event in Labour politics. It shows that the advantage which Labourism may secure from controlling the Boards of Guardians is smaller than was supposed. The apology made by Counsel on behalf of the Bermondsey Guardians was ignominious. It was that the resolution to grant relief to strikers was passed by the Guardians at a time when several thousand noisy men were outside the building demanding that a deputation should be heard, that there was no danger of the Guardians repeating what they admitted to be an illegality, and that they would not appeal against the surcharge.

The payments objected to were made to the dock strikers last summer, the Union having refused strike pay.

The Attorney General, at the relation of four firms who are ratepayers in the parish of Bermondsey, sought a declaration against the Bermondsey Guardians that the payment of relief to able bodied men who were able to obtain and perform work at wages to support themselves and their wives and families was illegal.

Mr. A. T. Miller, K.C., for the Attorney General, said what the relators objected to was the use in this way by the guardians of money provided for Poor Law purposes.

The Judge decided that the Attorney General was entitled to the declaration he sought, and ordered the Guardians to pay the costs of the action.

JUVENILE OFFENDERS.

In the year ending March 31st, 1923, 2,987 lads, of whom 53 per cent. had not been previously convicted, were sent to ordinary prisons. 1,663 of these lads were sentenced to a month or less, and 40 per cent. were committed in default of fines. 337 girls, of whom 46 per cent. had not been previously convicted, were also sent to ordinary prisons.

Mr. Pethick Lawrence (Lab.) desired that something might be done; but Mr. Henderson, Home Secretary, declared that there are no funds to establish separate prisons for offenders under 21 years. "They are separated from adult offenders as far as circumstances allow," he said.

We must inform the Home Secretary that there is no effective separation, and no attempt to effect it.

LONDON 'BUSES.

	1922.	1923.
Combine	3,451	4,472
Non-Combine	281	645

WOMEN AND THE POPULATION.

The census returns show the following fipures:—

1901: Total population, 40,831,396; Females all ages, 22,846,315; Women gainfully employed, 5,423,944 over 10 years.

1921: Total population, 42,769; Females of all ages, 22, 846,315; Women gainfully employed, 5,700,000 over 12 years.

REPARATIONS AND SECURITY.

Mr. Asquith asked when the two expert sub-committees sitting in Berlin and Paris on Reparations will report.

Mr. Ramsay MacDonald replied he does not know; the experts are not responsible to him or his Government, but to the Reparation Commission.

Mr. Asquith quoted an article in the *Times* stating that the French are working to turn the occupied territory into a special reparations preserve. The great industrialists of Germany, according to this report, have been informed that the new arrangements are to be concluded with the Franco-Belgian M.I.C.U.M. in which the British are not represented. British capitalist interests would therefore be left out of account. The deliveries in kind demanded from the industries in occupied territories are to be financed, it is said, by a method which would make it impossible for them to compete with the rest of Germany. Thus it is alleged the industries in occupied territory would be practically ruined and the Central Government of Germany would have greater difficulty in stabilising the currency.

Mr. MacDonald replied that the Government has seen the agreements between the French and Belgian organisations and the Ruhr industrialists, but considers them not contrary to the Treaty of Versailles.

THE SAAR.

Mr. MacDonald had previously stated that when Lord Parmoor went to the meeting of the League of Nations at Geneva he intended to ask that the Saar population be allowed to send representatives who might be heard when the Council should be considering the representation of the Saar population on the Saar Commission. When Lord Parmoor got to Geneva, Mr. MacDonald had said, Lord Parmoor had found himself bound by "commitments undisclosed," entered into by his predecessors, including an agreement to make Count Kossmann the Saar representative. Mr. Asquith wanted to know whether Mr. MacDonald's version was correct.

Mr. MacDonald now said the Foreign Office knew all about it, but Lord Parmoor did not. Later on, however, Mr. Ponsonby, the Under Secretary, got up to say Lord Parmoor also knew all about it before going to Geneva. The Prime Minister, as so often happened to Mr. Lloyd George, had either discovered a mare's nest or changed his mind. Mr. MacDonald said that the "bargain" to make Count Kossmann the Saar representative ought to be carried out.

Democracy, what violations are committed in our name?

Mr. Asquith pointed out that French troops still control the Saar. Mr. MacDonald replied that this is because the Saar Commission has not the funds to set up a Saar gendarmerie.

Someone asked whether the Saar population has to pay for the French troops. The Prime Minister said the Saar people pay for the gendarmerie of the Commission, but he

thought the Germans pay for the French troops in the Saar. It is just one of those little points about which, when suddenly raised, one finds one is rather doubtful. It turned out that the French pay.

SECURITY FOR FRANCE.

As to security for France, Mr. Asquith said that since the proposed pact to defend France between England and U.S.A. had not materialised, he considered that France, Germany, and all the countries depending on the Treaty of Versailles should get an assurance of defence against aggression in the form of an international guarantee from all the countries which are parties to the League of Nations.

Mr. MacDonald replied that France cannot get security from special pacts, that countries of importance would never make such pacts, and that such pacts would be useless without a military guarantee stating what armies and air force would be maintained, and what would be the dispositions of the Navy. Mr. MacDonald though that France herself would now prefer the guarantee of the League of Nations, "equipped, not with arms, but with all the machinery of exposing right and wrong and for explaining how things arise." Before that could be arranged Reparations must be settled, Mr. MacDonald averred. As to that, either the Allies and Germany might agree on a settlement or the Allies might agree, but Germany might object, or even the Allies themselves might disagree, but Mr. MacDonald regarded that possibility as unthinkable. He agreed with Mr. Asquith that Germany ought to come into the League of Nations.

THE LLOYD GEORGE ATTACK.

Mr. Lloyd George's attack on the Prime Minister was a hypocritical performance. His complaint that the present Government was not taking action against the French occupation of the Ruhr was neatly exposed by Mr. Maxton, who read from the Official Report of May, 1921, when Mr. Lloyd George read to the Commons the document he had handed to the German representative in London on behalf of the Allied Supreme Council. That document announced that unless the German Government within six days should declare its resolve to carry out the decisions of the Reparations Commission the Allies would occupy the Valley of the Ruhr and take all other naval and military measures, so long as Germany failed to comply with the conditions laid down.

One point made by Mr. Lloyd George was, however, an important one, little though one may think of his sincerity in making it. He asked a question which has been already put in these columns as to what Mr. MacDonald had meant in his letter to M. Poincaré, relative to a demilitarised area of Germany under the League of Nations as a guarantee of security to France. Did Mr. MacDonald mean more than that reference is provided by the Treaty of Versailles, which forbids the assembling of troops or erection of fortresses even so far as 50 kilometres east of the Rhine? If Mr. MacDonald's letter meant no more, why should he have raised, as though it were something new, that which is already in the Treaty of Versailles? Yet how could he suggest, to the detriment of Germany, a further demilitarised area, since he had for years denounced the Treaty for its excessive sternness and severity towards Germany?

To this question Mr. MacDonald has vouchsafed, as yet, no answer.

AGRICULTURAL LABOURERS' WAGES.

1920, average wage	43/-
1921, average wage	31/-
1922, average wage	28/-

POLICE FORCES.

Total strength of police force, England and Wales:—

1914	55,651
1923	56,845

CRIMINAL INVESTIGATION DEPARTMENT.

Assistant Commissioner Major General Sir Edward Borlase Wyndham Child; pay, £1,500; Army retired pay, £815.

Mr. Norman Kendal, Deputy Assistant Commissioner; pay, £1,000 to £1,200.

PLAIN SPEAKING.

Colonel Yate demanded the arrest of Shankat Ali, who, on a recent visit to Ceylon, called English statesmen "damned liars and hypocrites."

Mr. J. H. Thomas had asked the Governor for a report.

Lieut.-Commander Kenworthy: "Were not these statements made before the present Government came into office?"

Mr. Thomas: "I would not attempt to differentiate between statements made before or after the Government came into office."

JAKE THE DREAMER.

A STORY FOR LITTLE FOLK–

"Puff, puff, little sparrow, puff. puff. Are'nt you puffing out your breast and ruffling up your soft downy feathers to make yourself warm? Are you cold? Didn't your mother give you some nice bread and milk for your breakfast either? You are just like me, just like me, little sparrow. I'm just as hungry and cold as you," said little boy Jake to the sparrow who sat on the edge of the fountain in Trafalgar Square.

"Your feet don't look as cold as mine, little sparrow; they are covered with tiny scales, they are hard and wiry looking. Mine are all soft and helpless. Aren't you sorry for them when you see them all red and blue with cold? I am. I sit on one of them sometimes to try to keep it warm, but that sends my leg all to sleep. Your feathers are warmer than my old clothes, little sparrow; they don't leave any gaps like the holes in my knees and my heels. I wish I had a nice feather coat like you; I should be ever so warm and cosy if I had."

"Cheep, cheep, chirped the sparrow. "Cheep, cheep, cheep," but Jake thought he heard it say far more than that: "My feathers are warm enough and so am I," it seemed to say. "I'm only having a little snooze; but on these moist, cold mornings the city smoke slings to the mist and makes it nasty. It is quite depressing. It was as yellow as pea soup an hour ago, and half-an-hour ago it was almost black. It is positively disgusting. My family has always lived in London, but I am seriously thinking of flying off to the country. Things are going from bad to worse for us city birds. We hardly know where to get a bite of food."

"Didn't you get any breakfast this morning either?" asked Jake.

"Cheep, cheep, cheep, cheep; how stupid you are!" the sparrow seemed to answer. "I pick up my food in the roads, though there is little enough to be had in these days. The horses used to provide an abundance of dung with plenty of nice seeds in it for us, but in the city now it is cleared up almost before it has time to cool, and the horses are fast being replaced by those horrible motors that drop nothing but petrol."

"Haven't you a mother to do anything at all for you, poor little sparrow?"

"I've a nest of my own, cheep, cheep; I'm the father of several broods. We don't take years and years to grow up like you people," the sparrow chirped out sharply and fluttered his wings as though he would fly away.

"But don't you go to work like other fathers?" Jake asked in surprise. "If I had a father he'd be sure to go to work and we shouldn't be poor like we are. I should think they would call you a lazy bones to be snoozing here at this time of day, if you're a father!"

"Work!" chirped the sparrow stretching out a wing. "Of course I work! I build my nest in the spring and bring food to my mate when she is sitting on the eggs, and I help her to feed our young and teach them to fly."

"But haven't you got a master to work for like other people?"

"No, indeed. Cheep, cheep; we birds are not such fools! A master indeed. Cheep, cheep. We leave that to you. What fools you people are!" That was the sparrow's parting shot as he flew away.

Little Jake felt lonely when the sparrow had gone. He left the square and crossed the road to feast his eyes on the resplendent show of sweets and toys in the windows of the big restaurant. Jake dared not approach as near to the glass as he would have liked, lest the commissionaire, in his fine uniform, should drive him away.

Smartly dressed men and women with boys and girls of his own age passed in and out of the restaurant with gay talk and laughter. They seemed to enjoy the cold; their clothes were so warm. Jake's cheeks were white and his nose red in cold weather, but those children had cheeks like ripe red apples. How beautiful they were! Jake gazed on them with pleasure; but the commissionaire considered he was approaching too near to such magnificence and shouted to him to go away.

Jake ran off to the flower seller at the entrance of Charing Cross station. He stood close to her; she was always kind.

"What's the matter, son?" she asked.

"The sparrow said that people are fools to work for a master. What do you think, Mrs. Flowerseller?" Jake answered.

"The sparrow, my cock?" the flower seller said. "The sparrow? Do you mean to tell me you've been talking to sparrows? Talking to dogs and cats I understand, and talking to parrots; but talking to sparrows—I don't know anything about that? My parrot, now; he could tell you some stories to make your hair curl! If you'll come along with me when I pack up this evening I'll take you home to talk to my parrot."

"Thank you, I will please, Mrs. Flowerseller; and will you show me where you grow your flowers?"

"Grow my flowers, pet? I don't grow no flowers. I buy them in the market every morning. Most of them come from overseas at this time of year, like my parrot. My parrot is a wonderful bird; he's such a beauty!"

Jake ran about all day as though a little fire were burning in him, making his spirit warm and happy, although his hands and feet were as blue as ever. He quite forgot he was hungry in thinking of to-night's visit to the flower seller's home. He had dismissed from his mind her protest that she did not grow her flowers there; indeed he already saw in anticipation a beautiful bower of roses, carnations and peonies, with their heads all close together and hardly a leaf about them, just as they are in the flower seller's baskets. The strong scent of the imaginary flowers seemed to make him quite sleepy. The bower was radiant with sunshine. A gay little fountain played in the centre of the flowers and rained on them tiny drops of water that sparkled like diamonds.

When it was dark Jake squatted by the plinth in Trafalgar Square. His eyes were shut as he dreamed, but every now and then he opened them to see the time by one of the big clocks in the Strand. Whenever he did so he saw the dancing girl of the electric sign. She was ugly and jerky in her movements; but when next Jake closed his eyes, and saw again the flower seller's bower, a beautiful little dancer, with flaxen hair and spangled ballet skirts, appeared there and began to skip and pirouette along the tiny paths between the blossoms.

Jake was so much entranced by the little beauty that he was quite surprised when he suddenly discovered it was time to go to Mrs. Flowerseller. As he hastened to her pitch, his heart beat so fast with excitement that he could hardly breathe.

"Let me help you carry your baskets," Mrs. Flowerseller, Jake said politely.

"Bless you," she answered, hoisting them cheerily, "You've enough to do to carry yourself. Come along my cock!"

With the boy at her side, she set off down the Strand and along Fleet Street. It was new territory to Jake; he never went far from his home. Presently Mrs. Flowerseller turned, and then turned again down a narrow entry, pushed open a high gate, and traversed a path between beds of black soil, to an old house, lying back in the darkness, from which one lighted window shone out, like a friendly yellow eye. Unlock-

ing the door the flower seller led the way up the winding stairs of the tenement to the door of her own home.

Inside were neither flowers nor dancing girls; but Jake was delighted by what he saw. An old-fashioned room, with dark painted walls, almost blackened by age, some little prints in polished wooden frames, a gleam of brass and pewter, and a bit of old cottage china here and there upon the walls and mantelpiece. In the glow of the fire and candle-light was a little girl with rosy cheeks and flaxen curls; the very image of his day-dream dancer; but soberly dressed, in dark brown, with a clean white pinny, and a pair of scarlet slippers. Beside her was a little table with a white cloth laid for tea and the kettle boiling on the hob.

"Mam!" cried the little girl, jumping up.

The flower seller drew Jake forward. "Here is a mate for you," she said.

The little girl kissed Mrs. Flowerseller and then Jake, as though he were one of the family.

An old woman with a strange, dark wrinkled face, which seemed almost as knarled and weather-worn as the trunk of an old tree, sat dozing in the chimney corner, and, though the little girl placed a cup of tea beside her, she did not seem to notice.

Mrs. Flowerseller fried some bacon and eggs and the little girl brought a big plum cake from the cupboard.

When all but the old woman, who seemed to notice nothing, had eaten what Jake thought were enormously extravagant quantities, the little girl cleared away the tea things, and Mrs. Flowerseller brought the parrot from his corner and talked to him as he perched on her finger. The parrot replied with shouts and chuckles, and Mrs. Flowerseller interpreted his remarks with what seemed to Jake a truly marvellous intuition.

At the sound of footsteps outside, the little girl cried: "Here is David!" and rushed to open the door to one whom she greatly loved, bringing him in with one of his hands held by her two small ones against her cheek, and leading him to the big chair where she had been sitting.

David's hair was growing white. His deep-set eyes were golden brown, and seemed to Jake so warm and kind that he crept close to David, and David drew the boy up on his knee and laid his arms about him, gently taking off Jake's broken boots and ragged stockings, and chafing his little, cold feet with his strong warm hand.

Jake nestled close to David and listened enraptured to the stories he was telling of far away lands with brilliant birds and palm trees and tropical fruits and dark-skinned people. Then David began to talk of the future; of wonderful palaces, built for their own delight by joyous people, of the end of wagedom, of the reign of plenty, no hunger, no poverty, no slums. Mrs. Flowerseller listened with glowing eyes and happy smiles, and the little girl listened too, till she fell asleep with her head on Mrs. Flowerseller's knee.

When David's story ceased and he and Mrs. Flowerseller gazed into the fire in silence, Jake slumbered also. Then, suddenly, the old woman who had seemed asleep all the evening raised her head and chanted:

"I know a fountain of joy, O people! O people!
A fountain of plenty amid the desert,
That maketh the arid desert to grow green,
The herbs to bloom and the young lambs to skip;
Refresh yourselves in the fountain of plenty, O people!
Rejoice in its bounty and let your hearts be glad;
'Tis the fountain of brotherhood that produceth the miracle of plenty;
Come out of the dark places wherein your hymns are sung."

* * *

Jake started up from David's bosom where he had lain so quietly, and chattered in a high-pitched voice to the sparrow upon the fountain's rim. He babbled of waving palms, and birds with ruby eyes, and dark strange men with jewelled earrings, of children playing with golden balls, of flowers with lovely scent, and he cried out in ecstacy of diamond drops that fell from fountains upon the flowers, and of a little girl with flaxen curls who danced among them. He called his mother and told her the doors of plenty had been opened, showed her the loaves of bread, delicious sugar buns and rich plum cake she always said she liked, and nice brown eggs from the dairy round the corner, turkeys and geese and chickens, and joints of meat, all teeming through the doors for all who wished them, toys for the children, millions of pairs of boots and shoes in all sorts and sizes, beautiful clothes for all, nice hats for mother and pretty gloves, just like the ladies wear, flowers, fruit and flowers, and beautiful singing birds——

Jake fancied he was in Hyde Park. A beautiful woman was coming across the grass towards him, throwing out handfuls of flowers from her looped-up shawl. The flowers took root and grew and spread till the grass was dappled all over with them. Little sweet babies came running to the woman. They clasped her knees and kissed her hands, and she bent down to fondle them. White birds hovered about her. . . .

Jake stretched out his arms and began to cry. David drew Jake's face to his breast and stroked his hair.

Mrs. Flowerseller laid her hand on Jake's forehead. "The child is in a fever," she said, and began to bustle about the room.

* * *

The little girl waked up and heard David say he would carry Jake home to his mother, but Mrs. Flowerseller protested. "His mother will be out cleaning office till past midnight, and like as not, poor soul, she hasn't a handful of coal to make a fire."

Mrs. Flowerseller laid the little girl in her own bed and put Jake in the little girl's cot.

The old doctor came, and the little girl thought there was whispering and moving about all night, for she heard it whenever she woke.

* * *

The next days were quiet and heavy with something the little girl did not understand. A screen was drawn across part of the room, and she was told that she must not talk. Mrs. Flowerseller moved about with a finger to her lip, carrying a medicine bottle and a teaspoon, or a funny little vessel she called a feeding cup. The nights were broken by stealthy footsteps and whispered words, and the little girl was all alone in Mrs. Flowerseller's bed.

* * *

One morning everything was very quiet and Mrs. Flowerseller took her behind a screen to see a little boy who looked like a wax model of Jake lying white and still with flowers all round him.

Mrs. Flowerseller and the old woman and another woman the little girl did not know were crying.

David took the little girl on his knee and stroked her hair. She was very tired and she closed her eyes and nestled against the warm rough coat of David as little Jake had done.

She heard the strange women saying: "If I had not been so poor I should not have lost my boy."

SOME PASSAGES FROM IRISH HISTORY.

By H. Brown.

In the nineteenth century no Roman Catholic was allowed to represent the public interest, either in Parliament or in public office. The Roman Catholic agitation was bitter against this law. In 1810 Grattan brought forward a motion for Catholic Emancipation, which was turned down by Parliament. Much excitement was caused and disorder; meetings took place in several towns which resulted in street fighting, men being arrested and so on.

In 1817 the Military and Naval Oath Bill was passed, which opened all ranks of the army, and navy, to both Catholics and Protestants, but Grattan's Bill for the complete relief of Catholics was rejected by the Government. Agitation was gaining ground, and in the year 1823 Daniel O'Connell founded a Catholics' Association for the purpose of forwarding the movement, but in 1825 Parliament passed an Act to dissolve this Association. In the same year a Bill passed the Commons for Catholic Emancipation, but was thrown out by the House of Lords.

In 1828 Daniel O'Connell was elected as Member of Parliament for County Clare, but was not allowed to take his seat because he was a Catholic. Feeling ran high on both sides, but the Duke of Wellington's Ministry passed the Bill opening Parliament to Catholics and Protestants. This measure came into operation in the year 1829.

Rent and taxation bore hardly upon the Irish people. Speculators were buying up land to let it to tenants. These tenants let it to sub-tenants, and so on, all making a profit. In some places people were being charged £6 for an acre of potato land. Also people were compelled to pay Church tithes. Bad harvests added to the distress in rural districts. In 1831 and 1832 payment of tithes was by many people refused, and when the Government tried to insist upon payment only £12,000 was collected instead of the £104,000 due.

The people became desperate, and desperate deeds were done. In 1838 the Government transferred the payment of tithes from the tenants to the landlords. This caused a slight improvement certainly for a short time.

At this time Poor Law was introduced on the same basis as the English Poor Law, but the prevailing misery was little alleviated. Rents rose higher and higher owing to the increased demand for houses. Poor people unable to pay their rent were evicted from their homes and their belongings thrown into the street. Hardship was so bitter that masses of people had nothing but starvation in front of them. Raids upon shops and other forms of property grew in number.

In 1843 O'Connell started an agitation for the repeal of the union with Britain, for the Irish have always been for independence. A mass meeting that was to be held at Clontarf was prohibited by the authorities. Troops were sent to maintain order. Although this meeting did not take place O'Connell was arrested and charged with sedition and conspiracy. He was sentenced to a year's imprisonment with a heavy fine, which afterwards was withdrawn by the House of Lords; then O'Connell retired from public life and went abroad. He died in Genoa in 1847.

In the summer of 1845 a potato blight swept through the United Kingdom, ruining the potato crop both in England and Ireland. It did not affect England so much as Ireland, because potatoes form only a very subsidiary portion of the English people's food, but in Ireland, where nearly half the population use them as the chief article of diet, the loss of the usual crop caused a most horrible famine.

Thousands upon thousands of poor peasants were starved to death, especially in the west of Ireland, before help arrived. Although a million sterling was being spent each month by the Government upon famine relief, groups of dim-eyed wretches clad in miserable sacking wandered aimlessly along the roads with some vague idea of finding food. Others waited in their hovels until death came and relieved them of their sufferings.

The history of Ireland has been one long train of tyranny.

Dear Comrade, let us hope that the next emancipation will be that of the workers. Let us look at the past, live in the present, and hope for the future.

CLERICAL WORK.

Volunteers are needed for Clerical and Organising work. Comrades should write to the "Dreadnought" office.

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IRISH WORKER LEAGUE.

NEW WORKERS' REPUBLICAN MOVEMENT.—Sunday, 6th, 7.30. Inaugural Irish History Lecture. All welcome. 124, Walworth-road (near "Elephant"). Economics Class forming.

COMMUNIST WORKERS' MOVEMENT, WILLESDEN.

A group of the C.W.M. has been formed in Willesden. Mr. A. Parsons, 182, Chapter Road, Willesden, is acting as Secretary pro. tem. Intending members should communicate with him.

COMMUNIST WORKERS MOVEMENT.

(Anti-Parliamentary.)

For particulars of membership apply Secretary, 152, Fleet Street, London, E.C.

A Meeting, to form a Branch of the above, will be held in Walworth on Monday, April 7th.

For full particulars see next week's "Dreadnought," or inquire at 152, Fleet Street,

Meetings.

Sundays, 3 p.m., Hyde Park. N. Smyth and others.

The "Workers Dreadnought" may be obtained from Mr. A. Turner, 25 Windmill Lane, Stratford.

A LITERATURE PITCH.

Comrade Mrs. Ironside is organising a literature selling pitch in Oxford Street. Comrades willing to assist are asked to communicate with the "Dreadnought" office in order that we may forward their names to her.

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